

March 31, 2004
Wolf Trap Farm for the Performing Arts
Vienna

Members Present: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Barney Annas, Ron Carrington, Marilyn Gould, Gary Grant, Bonita Lestina, E.A. McMath, Alice Starr, Rod Taylor, Will Trinkle, and Bessida White

Members Absent: Beth Temple and Roddy Moore

Staff Present: Peggy Baggett, Donna Banks, Foster Billingsley, and Sharon Wilson

Guests: Tom Birch, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; Mary Briggs, Arlington County Division of Cultural Affairs; Nancy Brockman, Piedmont Council of the Arts; Julie Carter, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; Kym Crump, Blue Ridge Arts Council; Jo Hodgins, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; Susan Jennings, Arts Council of the Blue Ridge; Terre Jones, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; Jonathan Katz, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies; Stephanie Micas, Arts Council of Richmond; Robin Iten Porter, Arts Council of the Valley; Patricia Poupore, Virginians for the Arts; Cheryl Anne Powalisz, Alexandria Commission on the Arts; Marcia Thalheimer, Virginians for the Arts

Introduction

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Lu Ellsworth at 9:10 a.m. He thanked Alice and Ken Starr and the West* Group for hosting the reception at the Starrs' home on March 30th. He thanked the McLean Project for the Arts for organizing and hosting the reception following the event at the Starrs.

Dr. Ellsworth then introduced Patricia Poupore, the new Executive Director of Virginians for the Arts, and Marcia Thalheimer, new President of Virginians for the Arts. He spoke about the important partnership between the Commission and Virginians for the Arts.

Terre Jones, President/CEO of Wolf Trap, welcomed the Commissioners to the new Education Center of Wolf Trap. He gave an overview of some of the recent programs sponsored by Wolf Trap, including the partnership with the other national parks.

Peggy Baggett reviewed the agenda of the meeting.

Barney Annas made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 10, 2004. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Local Arts Agencies

Dr. Ellsworth noted that the Commission periodically discusses ways to strengthen the partnership between the Commission and the local arts agencies of the state. He stated that several current members of the Commission have experience as board members of local arts agencies.

Stephanie Micas, Executive Director of the Arts Council of Richmond, gave an overview of the current programs of the Arts Council. She asked that the Commission consider a new way for the Commission and Virginia local arts agencies to work together. She noted the models of such partnerships in North Carolina, Maryland, and New Jersey.

Susan Jennings, Executive Director of the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge in Roanoke, talked about the value of building a stronger grass roots advocacy effort by working through the local arts agencies and

about the need for professional development for local arts agency staff. She talked about her experiences as a new director in learning from her peers in the former statewide association of local arts agencies. She encouraged the Commission to create a task force to propose a new working relationship. She also recommended a separate funding program for local arts agencies to lessen the perceived competition with the arts producing organization and suggested that the General Assembly might be interested in funding such a program. She noted that the 1996 Local Arts Agency Task Force was ineffective because of its inability to agree upon the need for local arts agencies as part of the arts infrastructure of the state.

In the discussion that followed Commissioners raised concerns about the lack of local arts agencies in many areas of the state, the need for wide geographic representation in any discussion, the need to have all interested parties involved in any discussion from the beginning, and the problems with “turf battles” within the arts community.

Lu Ellsworth commented that it would be a good idea to have a study group with representation from local arts agencies, the Commission, legislators, and Virginians for the Arts. He stated that careful thought should be given to the structure, membership, and time line of the study group before moving forward.

Jonathan Katz, President/CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, then talked about national trends in advocacy and about models from around the country on partnerships between state and local arts agencies. NASAA is preparing a report on lessons learned about advocacy during the state budget crises of the past two years. He advised that any study of the relationship between the Virginia Commission for the Arts and Virginia local arts agencies begin with an honest mapping of existing strengths and weaknesses. He also talked about the need for a critical mass of effective local arts agencies with professional staff before statewide assemblies of local arts agencies can be successful.

Tour

The Commission then took a break for lunch and tours of the Filene Center for the Performing Arts and the new Education Center.

Advocacy

After lunch Tom Birch, legislative counsel for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, conducted a workshop on successful advocacy strategies.

Budget Update

Peggy Baggett reported that there has been little progress in the General Assembly in adopting the 2004-2006 state budget. She reported that she had consulted with the Office of the Attorney General. If there is no resolution on the state budget by June, the lawyer for the Commission will draft a resolution that the board can pass at the beginning of the June Commission meeting. This resolution will permit the board to approve grants on a tentative basis, contingent upon final action on the state budget. The Commission staff can then process the grant notification letters and first payments on the grants as quickly as possible without reconvening the board of the Commission.

Upcoming Conferences

Peggy Baggett reported that, with the renovation of several buildings in the Capitol Square area, public access to the Commission offices will be difficult over the next two years. The agency will pay reduced rent since the conference room cannot be used for panel and Commission meetings. The additional administrative funds will be used for upgraded computer equipment and for professional development for the staff and board. She and Lu Ellsworth urged as many Commissioners as possible to attend the joint convention of NASAA and Americans for the Arts in Washington, DC, in July. There is sufficient funding

for up to five people to attend the November Leadership Institute sponsored by NASAA in Orlando as well.

Election of Nominating Committee

Lu Ellsworth opened the floor for nominations to the Nominating Committee. Ron Carrington nominated Gary Grant. E. A. McMath nominated Ron Carrington and Beth Temple. Will Trinkle made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded. Bessida White asked if it is fair to elect a new member of the Commission, who does not know the other members well, to the Nominating Committee. Other Commissioners responded that it is good to have the voice of a new board member. The motion to close the nominations was approved unanimously. Will Trinkle then made a motion to approve the three nominees. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.